

Message Text

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22

ACTION EA-09

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5716

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

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AMEMBASSY MANILA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, ASEAN, SN

SUBJ: RAJARATNAM ATTACKS COMMUNIST THREAT TO ASEAN

1. FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM USED JULY 6 INSTALLATION DINNER OF ROTARY CLUB AS YET ONE MORE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTACK COMMUNISTS AND THREAT THEY POSE FOR REGION. RAJA'S LATEST PRONOUNCEMENT IS BUT LATEST THUMP IN ALMOST UNRELIEVED DRUMBEAT OF ATTACKS BY GOS ON LOCAL AND REGIONAL COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES SINCE LATE MAY, WHEN ARREST OF 50 SUSPECTED COMMUNISTS WAS ANNOUNCED (SINGAPORE 2645). GOS PRONOUNCEMENTS UNDOUBTEDLY MOTIVATED BY DESIRE TO EMPHASIZE FIRM ANTI-COMMUNIST LINE AFTER PRIME MINISTER LEE'S VISIT TO PRC AND PRIOR TO PENDING VISIT TO SINGAPORE OF DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER OF SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. IN ADDITION, THEY CAN BE SEEN AS WARNINGS TO LOCAL POPULATION TO RAISE THEIR GUARD AGAINST SUBVERSION.

2. RAJARATNAM'S GENERAL THESIS WAS STRAIGHTFORWARD AND ESSENTIALLY UP-BEAT. IN SOME RESPECTS IT SMACKED OF SECRETARY'S ALASTAIR BUCHAN LECTURE, BUT IT WAS MUCH MORE NARROWLY FOCUSED. RAJA'S MAIN POINT WAS THAT COMMUNIST INVINCIBILITY IS A MYTH

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CREATED BY PROPAGANDA DESIGNED TO CONVINCE PEOPLE THAT A

COMMUNIST VICTORY IS BOTH IRRESISTIBLE AND INEVITABLE. HE DID NOT DENY THAT COMMUNISM HAD ACHIEVED CERTAIN SUCCESSES IN THE REGION IN THE RECENT PAST BUT SAID THAT COMMUNIST FAILURES, ESPECIALLY IN BURMA, INDONESIA, MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE WERE PROOF THAT COMMUNISM WAS NOT WAVE OF THE FUTURE. RAJA CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT ACCEPTANCE OF EXISTENCE OF A COMMUNIST THREAT WAS REALISTIC.

3. RAJA REFERRED TO RECENT ARRESTS OF MALAY JOURNALISTS IN SINGAPORE AND KUALA LUMPUR (SINGAPORE 3213 AND OTHERS) AS WELL AS EARLIER EXPOSURE OF THREAT POSED BY SUBVERTED PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE AND BOURGEOISIE (SINGAPORE 2645). HE CONCLUDED THAT THE PRIMARY THREAT TO THE REGION DOES NOT COME FROM THE HUSSEIN JAHIDINS (FORMER EDITOR OF BERITA HARIAN SINGAPORE) OR THE PETER PANS (A SINGAPOREAN WHO CONSTITUTED THE AUSTRALIAN CONNECTION IN EARLIER CONSPIRACY) -- ALTHOUGH SUCH INDIVIDUALS ARE DANGEROUS AND WILL HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH. RATHER, THE REAL DANGER DERIVES FROM A POTENTIAL LACK OF STAMINA AND STEADFASTNESS ON THE PART OF THE NON-COMMUNISTS. RAJA ASSERTED THAT, PROVIDED THE LATTER ARE CONVINCED OF THEIR OWN STRENGTHS AND REMAIN RESOLUTE, THE COMMUNISTS, FAR FROM BECOMING A THREAT WOULD, AT WORST, BE A NUISANCE. HOLDRIDGE

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